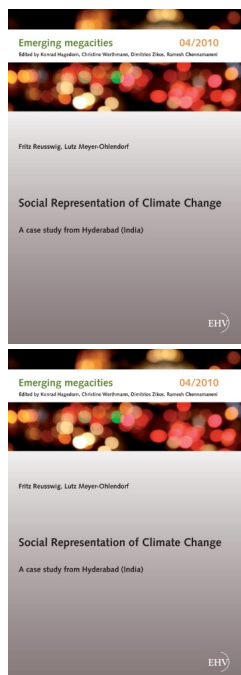


Social Representation of Climate Change



Bewertung: Noch nicht bewertet

Preis

Preis inkl. Preisnachlass: 18,17 €

Brutto-Verkaufspreis: 19,99 €

Netto-Verkaufspreis: 18,17 €

Preisnachlass:

MwSt.-Betrag: 1,82 €

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Beschreibung

In this report we underline the importance of studying the social representation of climate change for climate policy, especially in a democracy such as India. Social representations are, from a social science point of view, no epiphenomena of 'real' issues, but the very fabric of individual reality and, building on that, collective decision making. If climate change is not socially represented, it is not there in a society. We briefly characterise the Indian climate discourse, which we perceive as being more complex (heterogeneous) than the European or American one. After a brief look at other studies of climate change perceptions, we turn to our own small sample of qualitative interviews (n=16) in Hyderabad, covering a broad range of issues. We then focus on the way our respondents do represent climate change in the context of weather changes, of its causes, and of possible solutions. We present a typology of cognitive maps of climate change, and relate them to the lifestyle and the social context of the respondents that adhere to it. We also try to identify some starting points for a meaningful climate change discourse in Hyderabad, aiming at the improvement of both local adaptation and local mitigation. The report ends with some general conclusions.